

## Water – facts, issues, problems and solutions

by David Leaman

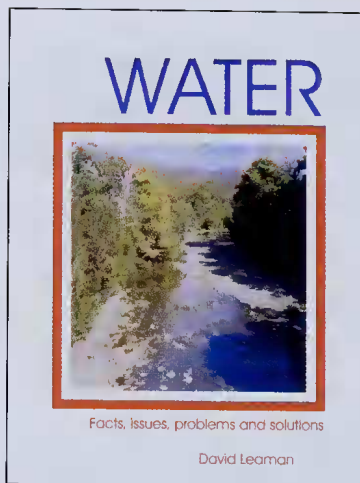
Publisher: *Leaman Geophysics, Hobart, 2007. ISBN: 9780958119948. RRP \$39.95*

This is not a conventional book on hydrology and water resources. It is a passionate account of the mismanagement of the Tasmanian natural environment, with particular regard to water. Many of David Leaman's concerns, and the strength and feeling in his accounts of his dealings with the Tasmanian Government bureaucracy, will resonate with many readers of *The Victorian Naturalist*.

The book consists of eight chapters and 15 appendices. There is a list of references, an index, and 14 pages of colour plates at the end of the book. Black and white illustrations are interspersed throughout the text. The first five chapters deal with facts about water and principles of hydrology, water quantity and related flow and allocation issues, water quality and water management. Chapter 6 is a long and rambling case study of water issues in Tasmania. Chapter 7 presents an overview of possible solutions to problems of water supply, and includes some interesting material on matters such as cloud seeding (also discussed in relation to Tasmania in Chapter 6), icebergs, privatisation and aquifer recharge. The final chapter is a set of concluding notes.

It is not clear why the author has chosen to include 15 appendices rather than simply incorporate the material they contain into the body of the text. The appendices, like much of the rest of the text, have a focus on Tasmanian forest management and include some details of the author's clashes with the bureaucracy. There are some unusual topics such as 'thermal springs', 'aerosols, rainfall and health', and the text ends with a cautionary note about the use of terminology such as 'the 1,000 year drought' which in hydrology never means what it appears to mean.

This book, now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, has arisen out of the author's teaching in Adult Education, Schools for Seniors and the



University of the Third Age. It has an emphasis on groundwater and surface-groundwater interactions, more detailed than usual in a book of this kind. This arises, no doubt, from his professional interests as a geophysical consultant. The origins of the material as teaching notes is obvious and I found, in some places, the subject matter was not explained in sufficient detail to allow me to follow it easily. For non-specialist readers, some of this will be tough going without the author in front of the class to answer your questions. The photos have been scanned at too low a density with consequent loss of sharpness.

I'll have to confess that I am not a disinterested reviewer of this book, given its focus on the activities of Forestry Tasmania. My own dealings with Forestry Tasmania and its tame 'watchdog', the Forest Practices Board, have led me to conclude that both these organisations are morally and scientifically bankrupt. David Leaman's writings reinforce this view. If you have ever harboured any thoughts, as I do, that Tasmania is not an appropriate entity to be a sovereign state, then this book will confirm your suspicions.

There is a lot of interesting material in this book and many useful facts and figures. If you are interested in, and concerned about, the ongoing rape of Tasmania's forest resources, then read this book.

**Brian Finlayson**  
The University of Melbourne  
Melbourne, Victoria 3010